

### IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A switching device comprising  
a segmentation unit to receive data packets of variable size from external sources, to divide packets having a length greater than a maximum segment length into a plurality of segments, and to store the data packets as segments, wherein each data packet includes one or more segments, each segment has a length that is less than or equal to the maximum segment length, and each segment identifies whether additional segments are included in the associated data packet ~~the data packets received having a length greater than a maximum segment length are divided into multiple segments;~~

a plurality of queues to store the segments, wherein the queues are associated with destinations;

a scheduler to generate a schedule including a data path from at least one queue to an associated destination;

a framer to aggregate a plurality of segments to form a frame, wherein the frame has a maximum frame length, wherein the segments are retrieved from the at least one queue, and wherein the frame may contain segments associated with different data packets;

a transmitter to transmit the frame to the associated destination, wherein the segments within the frame are transmitted together; and

a switch fabric to provide a configurable connection between the external ~~a plurality of sources and external a plurality of destinations,~~ wherein said switch fabric is configured by said scheduler, and wherein said switch fabric transmits frames from at least a subset of the external plurality of sources to at least a subset of the external plurality of destinations during a schedule cycle.

2. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said segmentation unit divides the data packets having a length greater than the maximum segment length to form at least a first segment having the maximum segment length.

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3. (Original) The device of claim 2, wherein a last segment formed by said segmentation unit may be less than the maximum segment length.
  4. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said segmentation unit identifies a final segment belonging to a particular data packet.
  5. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said scheduler generates the schedule based on requests for data packets from particular queues to be transmitted to particular destinations.
  6. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein said scheduler matches the requests and resolves conflicts in order to generate the schedule.
  7. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said plurality of queues include one or more queues per destination based on priorities associated with the destinations.
  8. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said framer forms the frame by aggregating segments from some subset of the one or more associated queues.
  9. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said framer forms the frame by aggregating complete segments.
  10. (Original) The device of claim 9, wherein said framer pads the frame to reach the maximum frame length.
  11. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said transmitter transmits the segments making up a particular data packet in order.
  12. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said transmitter interleaves segments associated with different data packets.

13. (Original) The device of claim 1, further comprising a striper to stripe the frame across a plurality of channels.

14-26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A store and forward device comprising  
a plurality of Ethernet cards to receive data from and transmit data to external sources,  
wherein the plurality of Ethernet cards include

a segmentation unit to receive data packets of variable size from external sources, to divide packets having a length greater than a maximum segment length into a plurality of segments, and to store the data packets as segments, wherein each data packet includes one or more segments, each segment has a length that is less than or equal to the maximum segment length, and each segment identifies whether additional segments are included in the associated data packet;

a plurality of ingress queues to store the segments based on destinations;

a framer to aggregate a plurality of segments associated with a destination to form a frame to be transmitted, wherein the frame may contain segments associated with different data packets;

a deframer to receive a transmitted frame and to extract segments making up the frame therefrom;

a plurality of egress queues to store the extracted segments based on destinations;

a state monitor to track complete packets contained within the plurality of egress queues; and

a reassembly unit to combine the segments making up a complete packet together to generate the packet and to transmit the packets to external sources;

an ingress interface module to receive packets of variable size, store the packets as segments in queues associated with at least some subset of destination and priority, aggregate multiple segments together to form a frame, and transmit the segments within the frame together, wherein the segments stored in the queues have a segment maximum size and the packets having

~~a larger size are divided into multiple segments, and wherein the frames have a maximum frame size, include a plurality of segments and may include segments associated with different packets, and~~

~~an egress interface module to receive frames, divide the frames into segments, store the segments in a queue, monitor the queues for complete packets, and reassemble a packet after the segments making up the packet are received;~~

~~a switching matrix to provide selective connectivity between said Ethernet cards to transmit frames therebetween;~~

~~a backplane consisting of a plurality of channels to connect said plurality of Ethernet cards to said switching matrix; and~~

~~a scheduler to select connectivity between Ethernet cards and to configure said switching matrix accordingly.~~

28. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein said backplane also connects said plurality of Ethernet cards to said scheduler.

29. (Original) The device of claim 28, wherein said backplane uses same channels to connect said Ethernet cards to said switching matrix and to said scheduler.

30. (Original) The device of claim 28, wherein said backplane provides a logical separation of data path between said Ethernet cards and said switching matrix and scheduling path between said Ethernet cards and said scheduler.

31. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein the maximum frame size is selected based on at least some subset of configuration time of data path, scheduling time for scheduler, and complexity of scheduling algorithms.

32. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein the backplane is optical.

33. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein the switching matrix is optical.

34. (Currently Amended) A store and forward device comprising

a plurality of ingress interface modules ~~to receive packets of variable size, store the packets as segments in queues, aggregate multiple segments together to form a frame, and transmit the segments within the frame together, wherein the segments stored in the queues have a segment maximum size and the packets having a larger size are divided into multiple segments, and wherein the frames have a maximum frame size and include a plurality of whole segments and may include segments associated with different packets;~~ wherein each ingress interface module includes

a segmentation unit to receive data packets of variable size from external sources, to divide packets having a length greater than a maximum segment length into a plurality of segments, and to store the data packets as segments, wherein each data packet includes one or more segments, each segment has a length that is less than or equal to the maximum segment length, and each segment identifies whether additional segments are included in the associated data packet;

a plurality of queues to store the segments based on destinations; and

a framer to aggregate a plurality of segments associated with a destination to form a frame to be transmitted, wherein the frame may contain segments associated with different data packets;

a plurality of egress interface modules ~~to receive frames, divide the frames into segments, store the segments in queues, monitor the queues for complete packets, and reassemble a packet after the segments making up the packet are received;~~ wherein each egress interface module includes

a deframer to receive a transmitted frame and to extract segments making up the frame therefrom;

a plurality of queues to store the extracted segments based on destinations;

a state monitor to track complete packets contained within the plurality of egress queues; and

a reassembly unit to combine the segments making up a complete packet together to generate the packet and to transmit the packets to external sources;

a switching matrix to provide selective connectivity between said plurality of ingress interface modules and said plurality of egress interface modules;

a backplane consisting of a plurality of channels to connect said plurality of ingress interface modules and said plurality of egress interface modules to said switching matrix; and

a scheduler to select connectivity between said plurality of ingress interface modules and said plurality of egress interface modules, and to configure said switching matrix accordingly.

35. (Original) The device of claim 34, wherein a pipeline schedule is implemented that includes at least some subset of

said ingress interface modules forming and transmitting requests to said scheduler,

scheduler computing a schedule based on the requests,

said scheduler transmitting grants to associated ingress interface modules and configuring said switching matrix, and

said ingress interface modules transmitting the frames in response to the grants.

36. (Original) The device of claim 34, wherein said switching matrix extracts a clock from frames received, re-times the frames to a common internal clock domain, aligns any configuration changes provided by said scheduler to the boundaries of the frames, and maintains an uninterrupted data stream to the egress interface modules by transmitting an idle stream when no frames are being transmitted.